

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 683

By Ferguson

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Emmett Eugene Thurman.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Emmett Eugene "Gene" Thurman; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Thurman was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, he served with acumen and alacrity as a teacher, a guidance counselor, Principal, Supervisor of Instruction, and Superintendent of Schools for the Harriman City School System, in which positions he earned the respect of his peers and superiors alike for the exemplary quality of his work; and

WHEREAS, born on July 22, 1936, in Crossville, Gene Thurman was a 1954 graduate of Cumberland County High School; he continued his education, earning an undergraduate degree and two graduate degrees from Tennessee Technological University in Cookeville; and

WHEREAS, known affectionately by his students as "Mean Gene," Mr. Thurman served as Principal of Harriman High School from 1971 until 1985; during his thirty-five years as an educator, he left a legacy of investing in and deeply impacting countless students; and

WHEREAS, following his astute service with the Harriman City School System, Mr. Thurman joined the architectural firm Kaatz, Binkley Jones, and Morris, for which firm he stood as the Director of Marketing for the remainder of his career; and

WHEREAS, an active community leader throughout his life, Gene Thurman stood as President of the Harriman Teachers Association, chaired the Education Committee for the Roane County United Way, and lent his time and many talents to Leadership Roane County; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to accolades and awards for his many accomplishments and civic contributions, Mr. Thurman was the honored recipient of the 1964 Outstanding Young Educator Award from the Harriman Junior Chamber of Commerce, and he also received the Distinguished Service Award from the State of Tennessee Department of Education in 1995, upon his retirement from Harriman City Schools; and

WHEREAS, in 1995, alumni and friends of the Harriman City School system established the “Mean Gene” Emergency Grant Fund in his honor; the fund provides money to Harriman City School students who may not have the means to purchase the “extras,” such as yearbooks and class rings, that are such important memoirs in their high school experience; and

WHEREAS, upon learning of this fund, Gene Thurman felt extremely honored, saying, “My most lasting memories will be my association with the students...seeing these kids achieve has been all the recognition I need;” he also spoke for a moment about his journey as an educator, adding, “It has been a trip—lots of tears and lots of laughter—I wouldn’t take anything back”; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Thurman was an active and devout member of Riverside Baptist Church in Harriman, which he served faithfully for many years as a Sunday school teacher and a member of numerous committees during his forty-one years of membership; and

WHEREAS, an avid Tennessee football fan, Gene Thurman attended nearly every home and away game for almost forty years; his enthusiastic presence at tailgates and football games will be greatly missed by his family and friends; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Thurman was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, he enjoyed the loving companionship of his wife of forty-nine years, Lynda Collins Thurman, and was the proud father of two sons and their wives, Trent and Francie Thurman and Todd and Parri Thurman; and

WHEREAS, Gene Thurman was preceded in death by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. I.N. (Buck and Camilla) Thurman; and his stepfather, Olin C. Julian; and

WHEREAS, he will be sorely missed by his four grandchildren, Ben, Sam, Camilla, and Karennia; his mother-in-law, Marie Collins; his brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Gary and Donna

Collins; his nephews, Robert Crabtree, Bryant Collins and his wife, Stephanie, and Brady Collins; and his aunts, Eula Bomar and Martha Bozanich; and

WHEREAS, Gene Thurman leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Emmett Eugene Thurman, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Emmett Eugene Thurman.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.